

Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting for CSD 13

Finland's Statement on Human Settlements for Wednesday 2 March Conference Room 4 10.00 - 13.00

"Providing improved housing and associated services to the urban and rural poor"

Mr. Chairman

Finland would like to support the Secretary General's report on human settlements, especially stressing the ideas presented in paragraph 28 of the report. We would also like to support the issues raised by several delegations on issues such as integrated planning, good governance and participatory governance at the local level.

We would like to highlight as one key challenge the issue of excessive urban sprawl which can lead to a multitude of problems in achieving targets in human settlements development.

Finland would like to support solutions in line with integrated planning and management and sustainable land use in order to achieve sustainable urbanisation. In relation to consumption patterns we would like to stress that 50% of energy consumption, for example, in the EU, is related to human settlements and transport. Therefore developments in the urban structure and the transportation system have a huge impact on consumption and need to be addressed if sustainable urbanisation is to be achieved.

With regard to sustainable land use we feel that a clear policy is needed. Uncontrolled urban sprawl is a risk for larger urban areas and can lead to extremely high increases infrastructure costs in water, sanitation, transportation and other services, which can seriously hinder access to these services by the poor. In fact we need policies on sustainable urban planning and management which encompass land use planning, transport, land administration, housing finance, in addition to water and sanitation. We support UN Habitat's view that human settlements is the overarching theme under which issues such as water, sanitation, transport and other services belong.

In relation to good governance we would like to state that we see it as a prerequisite for sustainable urbanisation, planning and management. Without good governance integrated participatory planning cannot flourish.

Finland supports actions towards secure tenure and functioning land markets and sees these to be prerequisites for housing finance to be successful.

With regard to monitoring we would like to state on the behalf of the EU that for human settlements, the leading role of UN Habitat needs to be strengthened and further recognised.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.